

61

THE
L I F E
O F
MR. CHARLES PRICE.

[Price One Shilling.]

MR. CHARLES FRIDG



—————

THE
L I F E
OF THAT
EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER,
MR. CHARLES PRICE;

WHEREIN ARE MINUTELY DESCRIBED,
The various Artifices he made Use of in circulating his
FORGERIES on the BANK.

By Order of the Directors of the BANK OF ENGLAND.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR JAMES RIDGEWAY, OPPOSITE
SACKVILLE-STREET, PICCADILLY.

MDCCLXXXVI.

W. Musgrave

EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER

MR. CHARLES T. LICE

WHENEVER A MAN IS ASSIGNED

THEY ARE NOT TO BE CONSIDERED
FOR GENTLEMAN



By Order of the Directors of the British Museum

LONDON:
PRINTED BY JAMES BARNARD, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.
SHEPHERD & CO., ST. MARTIN'S LANE.
1841.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Pages, which record the transactions of the most finished and notorious Cheat that ever disgraced human nature, appeared originally in detached parts of different Newspapers; the compilation of which, together with large additions, we hope will not be disagreeable to our readers, whom we have presented with a Portrait, (if we may be allowed the expression) as like the original, as the original was to himself.

ALBERT H. M. B. 1871

THE following is a list of the

collections of the

British Museum

which are

now in the

possession of the

British Museum

and are

now in the

possession of the



PARTICULARS

OF

MR. CHARLES PRICE.

DE mortuis nil nisi bonum, is a maxim as wise as it is ancient. It was founded in charity to the dead—it humanely supposed, that the deceased had some good qualities to counterpoise his bad ones, and therefore that the latter ought to be buried with his body: but Mr. Price was an exception to

B

the

the supposition. With a thousand bad qualities, those who knew him most intimately, cannot recollect that he had even one good one; and not having it in our power to relate any of his virtues, truth and justice will not permit us to bury his vices.

In giving an account of this very extraordinary man, we shall begin where the generality of narrative-writers leave off, with an observation on his exit. Conscious of his own guilt, facts hourly rising upon facts, and a public ignominious death staring him full in the face, he sunk under the weight of his own fears. Without fortitude to support him in the hour of trial, he determined to avoid the fate of a public execution, by an act of private desperation.—Had his courage been equal to his skill, he would have met his fate with a modest and resolute manliness; but he rather chose to convince the world, that his cowardice was as great

as his cunning: from which one inference may safely be drawn, that Mr. Price is a tremendous instance, that though art and address may triumph for a period, yet when public justice overtakes public offenders, human ability is the most deceitful and insufficient prop that ever ingenious guilt can rest upon. We ventured to moralize thus far upon the shocking catastrophe, because of all his accumulated crimes, self-murder was his last and worst.

This unhappy man was apprehended about the 15th day of last month, at Mr. Aldus's, a Pawnbroker in Berwick-street; had passed only three examinations, and executed himself in Tothilfields Bridewell, on the 24th day of the same month, there being only ten days from his apprehension to his dissolution. Great must have been the horrors of his mind, before he could conclude upon his own destruction; but the composure and

deliberation with which he perfected it, gave the finishing stroke to that character with calmness, which all who knew him, knew he was master of, and which his machinations have manifested, from the year 1780, to the hour of detection. He was servile to extreme meanness, where his servility could be recompensed by a shilling—he was master of the most consummate effrontery and impudence, when Justice called upon him for that shilling, if unsupported by law; and he never paid it but with an eye to further plunder, and then he abounded with such professions of honesty, that all who could read mankind saw he did not possess a grain of it. In fine, he was a true Lottery-Office *Adventurer*. He was also an adept in that species of flattery, distinguished by us under the word *pataver*. He possessed an extensive knowledge of men and manners, and was a proficient in reading the heart of man; and to superficial observes, appeared a very sensible

fible person. He was conversant in most of
 the living languages, had a smattering of
 each, but master of none; and not having
 had the advantages of a liberal education,
 he was very deficient in his own. He had
 travelled all over France and Holland, and
 been at most of the German Courts. He
 was at Copenhagen during the time of the
 unhappy fate of the late Queen of Denmark,
 sister to our Sovereign; and he, at that time,
 wrote a pamphlet, clearing her of all suspi-
 cions; and in which he pointed out the true
 cause of that degrading attack, and what was
 more dear to her than her life, her character,
 and thereby to effect an intended revolution
 in favour of the Queen Dowager's son. One
 of those pamphlets he gave Mr. Fenwick,
 the Keeper of Tothilfields Bridewell, which
 we have lately read, and though drawn up
 in very imperfect language, yet it proved
 him to have an eye directed to the cabals of
 the Court, and an understanding capable of

developing its intrigues. His character about the 'Change in London was well known—he was a keen, *intriguing speculator*, well versed in the mystery of the *Bulls* and *Bears*. His head enabled him to make the most accurate calculations, but his heart would never permit him to enjoy the fruits of even his honest labours, if such they might be deemed; for, if possible, he never would comply with the demands of a fortunate customer, unless actually terrified into it; and to terrify him, required no small portion of ingenuity and resolution.—This natural propensity to dishonesty was the spring of all his misfortunes; it made him shift from place to place to avoid the abuse of the vulgar, and the clamorous calls of lucky adventurers. His last office was the corner of King-street, Covent-Garden, from whence he was driven, about six years ago, by a most unaccountable run of ill luck,

luck, and esteemed himself happy in a private decampment.

Ever since that period, Mr. Price has lived in obscurity; and, as it was then he began his dishonest practices, it is a singular circumstance for reflection, that no man can live happy, who offends against the laws of his country; particularly in those instances which, as they are the most dangerous and destructive to society, naturally call for every exertion to detect; and where wisdom and power united, can never fail, at last, in the accomplishment.

His domestic character was still worse.— Though a perfect sycophant abroad, at home he was the most absolute tyrant; nor could a prudent, beautiful, virtuous woman, endowed with every qualification to render the marriage state happy, soften a brutality of disposition, when the ample fortune he had obtained

obtained with her, had been squandered by him in intrigues, as pitiful as they were expensive; for with all his outward appearances of gentility, he had a degree of pride that was truly contemptible, and a mind equally low and mean.

We have thought proper to give this general outline of his character, that the reader may be enabled to form some idea of the consistency of his conduct, and be prepared for a relation of his transactions, which were as surprising as his character.

Driven thus to expedients, and having a large family of eight children to support, he turned his thoughts to that attempt which proved so fatal to him; and, what is very extraordinary, always has proved fatal to every man who made the attempt (and we will venture to prognosticate always will)—a forgery on the Bank of England.

land. His first attack on the Bank, was about the year 1780, when a forged note had been taken there, so complete in all its parts, *the engraving, the signatures, the water-marks, &c.* that it passed through various hands *unsuspected*; and was not discovered, till it came to a certain department in the routine of that office, and through which, *no forgery whatever can pass undiscovered.*— This occasioned a considerable alarm among that great and truly respectable body of gentlemen, and notes upon notes flowed in about the Lottery and Christmas times, without even the least possibility of tracing out the first negociator. Various consultations were held, various plans laid, and innumerable were the efforts of detection, but in vain;—they were traced up to one man from every quarter, always disguised, always inaccessible; and we will venture to pronounce, the forger would have remained much longer a secret, but for the unwearied attention

attention and cool collected plans of Mr. Clark, a public officer at Bow-street, well known for his ingenuity in detecting offenders on the Bank, Mint, &c. Indeed we may venture to say, that had he been left to his own discretion, to have followed the dictates of his own understanding, and to have carried into execution his own plans, the offender would not have reigned so long; for although those who took upon them the office, were gentlemen of integrity and unblemished characters, they were insufficient for the undertaking, as the sagacity of Mr. Price always proved an over-match for their zeal, assiduity, or stratagem. As, from its very great importance to society, they took the business into their own hands, *one person only excepted*, they found, by experience, the inefficacy of their measures.

Had Mr. Price permitted a partner in his proceedings, had he employed *an engraver*,
—had

—had he procured *paper* to be made for him, with *water-marks* put into it, he must have been soon discovered;—but Price was himself alone. He engraved his own plates; he made his own paper, *with the water-marks*; and he was his own negociator; thereby confining a secret to his own breast, which he wisely deemed not safe in the breast of another; even Mrs. Price had not the least knowledge or suspicion of his proceedings. Having practised engraving till he had made himself sufficient master of it, he then made his own ink, to *prove* his own works: having purchased implements, and manufactured the water-mark, he next set himself to counterfeit the *hand-writings*; and succeeded so far, as even to puzzle a part of the first body of men in the world. The abilities of the unhappy Ryland, were exerted in his profession, and therefore the imposition was less to be wondered at: but here was a novice in the art, capable of
equal

equal deception, in every part of the dangerous undertaking; and all attempts to discover him, proving equally abortive, the Bank came at last to the resolution of describing the offender, by the following

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

Public-Office, Dec. 5, 1780.

A F O R G E R Y.

“ WHEREAS a person, answering the following description, stands charged with
 “ forging two notes, purporting to be Bank
 “ notes, one for 40l. and the other for 20l.
 “ whoever will apprehend him, or give such
 “ immediate notice at this office, as may be
 “ the means of apprehending him, shall receive ONE HUNDRED POUNDS Reward,
 “ on his commitment.

“ Or

" Or if any person concerned in the above
 " forgery, (except the person hereunder de-
 " scribed) will surrender, and discover his
 " or her accomplices, he or she will be ad-
 " mitted an evidence for the Crown, and
 " on conviction of any one offender there-
 " in, receive Two HUNDRED POUNDS re-
 " ward.

" And if any Engraver, Paper-maker,
 " Mould-maker, or Printer, can give in-
 " formation of the engraving any plate,
 " making any mould, or paper, or printing
 " any note resembling Bank notes, shall
 " receive Two HUNDRED POUNDS reward,
 " on conviction of any of the offenders in
 " the above forgery.

" He appears about fifty years of age,
 " about five feet six inches high, stout made,
 " very fallow complexion, dark eyes and
 " eye-brows, speaks, in general, very deli-
 C berately,

“berately, with a foreign accent; has worn
 “a black patch over his left eye, tied with
 “a string round his head; sometimes wears
 “a white wig, his hat flapped before, and
 “nearly so at the sides; a brown camblet
 “great coat, buttons of the same, with a
 “large cape, which he always wears so as
 “to cover the lower part of his face; ap-
 “pears to have very thick legs, which hang
 “over his shoes, as if swelled; his shoes
 “are very broad at the toes, and little, nar-
 “row, old-fashioned silver buckles; black
 “stocking breeches; walks with a short
 “crutch stick, with an ivory head; stoops,
 “or affects to stoop, very much, and walks
 “slow, as if infirm; he has lately hired
 “many hackney coaches in different parts
 “of the town, and been frequently set
 “down in or near Portland-place, in which
 “neighbourhood it is supposed he lodges.

“He

" He is connected with a woman, who
 " answers the following description :—
 " She is rather tall, and genteel, thin face
 " and person, about thirty years of age,
 " light hair, rather a yellow cast on her
 " face, and pitted with the small-pox, a
 " down-cast look, speaks very slow ; some-
 " times wears a coloured linen jacket and
 " petticoat, and sometimes a white one, a
 " small black bonnet, and black cloak,
 " and assumes the character of a Lady's-
 " maid.

" N. B. It is said, that about fifteen
 " months since, he lodged at Mrs. Parker's,
 " No. 40, in Great Titchfield-street, (who
 " is since dead) at which time he went by
 " the name of Wigmore."

The above advertisement drove Mr. Price
 to his wits :—it forced him, for a time, to
 refrain from the circulation, and for some

months put a total stop to it. The next lottery-season he re-commenced his schemes, and Mr. PATCH again came forth, with all his secret *eclat*; notwithstanding every scheme that ingenuity could devise to detect them had been practised.

It is not unworthy observation, that hand-bills were delivered from house to house, throughout the whole of the quarter where he was most suspected to reside, and at the very house which he daily resorted to, and where all his implements were fixed. This was the neighbourhood of Mary-le-bone, Portland-place, Oxford-street, and Tottenham-court-road; nay, it was thrown down an area, to the only person in whom he placed any confidence, *a lady*, with whom the reader will be presently acquainted. By this means, Price was apprized of his immediate danger, and consequently took his measures accordingly:—In the
common

common phrase, it *blew him up*; but it certainly was the means that prevented his then being apprehended. Eagerness to secure, banished that foresight and caution, which are ever necessary whenever it is in pursuit of artful villainy. The animal, whose sagacity is a proverb, can never be secured in haste; to entrap him, requires superior patience, caution, and cunning.

In the preceding part of this narrative, we mentioned that Mr. Price had no partner, no person to whom he intrusted any branch of the business of forging a bank note: we mean by that, that *he* employed no *mechanic* to assist him; but a *confidante* he most assuredly had, and a female, who was selected for the business with as much wisdom, as he discovered sagacity in his projects. It is no less extraordinary than true, that this *confidante* was his own wife's aunt, by the mother's side, with whom he

had had a long and perfect intimacy, previous to his marriage with Mrs. Price. Her name is Pounteney; and what is still more surprising, he carried on the connection to the day of his death, unknown to his wife; was daily with her, divided his dinner-times equally between the two, and the niece had, for ten years past, through the impositions of her husband, considered her aunt either as dead, or residing abroad. For this deception we shall account hereafter; one thing we must here observe, the wife was all innocence, without art, or understanding in the ways of the world, to be what is commonly called cunning, but, perhaps, had had a little reason to be jealous. In short she was perfect simplicity, and, in her juvenile days, was distinguished by the appellation of the *pretty idiot*.—He prudently, therefore, thought her not fit to be trusted. Mrs. Pounteney, *the aunt*, was a character extremely opposite to that of her niece; she

she was *really* cunning, artful, and capable of executing any plan which Price would chalk out for her. In short, she was the woman *after Price's own heart*, and having had the judgment to select her for his operations, there is no wonder, under the tutelage of Mr. Price, she proved a justification of his choice. It is easy, therefore, to be discovered, why Mrs. Price was not thought by him a fit object to be trusted with so important a secret. As he perfectly knew she was *too fond of her filthy bargain*, he wisely judged, that a want of understanding in a pretty woman, is a certain proof of the want of a necessary reservation, and that he ought to be equally apprehensive of her fondness and simplicity, in a case where his own life was immediately concerned. Having made choice of this woman as an assistant, his apparatus being all ready, he began his operations; living then at Paddington, with Mrs. Price, whom he went to
nightly,

nightly, and having lodgings also near Portland-Place, where he visited her aunt daily, and where all the utensils for his undertakings were concealed. Every thing being thus prepared, his next and chief scheme was a negociator; for this his wits were set to work, and he procured one in the following manner.

In October, 1780, which was about the Lottery time, Mr. Price put an advertisement into the paper, in which he required a servant, who had been used to live with a single gentleman, and the direction was to C. C. Marlborough Coffee-house, Broad-street, Carnaby-market. An honest young man, and who then lived with a musical instrument-maker in the Strand, whose name, for very obvious reasons, we keep secret, not being much wanted by his master, and having been desired by that master to look into the papers for a place, happened to read Mr. Price's advertisement, and accordingly
sent

sent a letter to the Marlborough Coffee-house, as directed. He heard nothing further of this for a week ; when one evening, just as it was dusk, a coach drove up to his master's door, and the coachman enquired for the man who had answered the advertisement, at the same time saying there was a gentleman over the way in a coach, wanted to speak with him. On this the young fellow was called, and went to the coach, where he was desired to step in. There he saw an apparent old man, a foreigner, gouty, wrapped up with five or six yards of flannel about his legs, a camblet furtout buttoned up over his chin, close up to his mouth, a large *patch* over his left eye, and every part of his face so hid, that the young fellow could not distinguish any part of it, but one eye, his nose, and a small part of his cheek. To carry on the deception still greater, Mr. Price thought proper to place the man on his left side, on which eye the patch was, so
that

that the old gentleman could take an askance look at the young man with his right eye, and discover then only a very small portion indeed of his face. He appeared, by this disguise, to be between sixty and seventy years of age; and afterwards, when the man saw him standing, not much under six feet high, owing to boots or shoes, with heels very little less than four inches. Added to this deception, he was so buttoned up and straightened as to appear perfectly *lank*.

It may not be here ill-timed to those who did not know him, to give the true description of his person. He was about five feet six inches high, and a compact neat made man, rather square shoulders, and somewhat inclined to corpulency; his legs firm and well set; but, by nature, his features made him look much older than he really was, which was *forty-five*. His nose was what we call a *parrot's nose*; his eyes small and grey;

grey; his mouth stood very much inwards, with quite thin lips; his chin pointed and prominent, with a pale complexion:—but what contributed as much as any thing to favour his disguise of speech, was his loss of teeth. He walked exceedingly upright, was very active and quick in his walk; and was what we describe a man to be, when we call him a *dapper made man*.

To this person, whose christian name was Samuel, Mr. Price affected great age, bodily infirmity, an hectic cough, and a disability of almost getting out of the coach. Samuel having been thus seated by the side of Mr. Price, was told he was not wanted by him, (Price). but as an under servant to a young Nobleman of great fortune, under age, and then in the country, naming Bedfordshire, to whom he was, and had been some years, guardian. Price then began to enquire into the particulars of Samuel's life;

7

when

when being informed, and finding him a young fellow for the purpose, honest and ingenuous, talked to him about wages; and Samuel enquired if he was to be in livery or not? To this Mr. Price replied, that he could not really tell, for the young Nobleman was a very whimsical character, and that was a circumstance which might be settled hereafter. To carry on the farce he desired Samuel to call his master to the coach to give him a character, which being done, and the master giving him such a one as Price pretended to approve of, a bargain was struck for 18s. per week, and a direction given to call on Mr. Brank, Price's assumed name, at No. 39, Titchfield-street, Oxford-street.

Pursuant to the appointment, which was the second or third evening after, Samuel went to No. 39, and there saw this guardian of a minor Nobleman, and whom Samuel

was

was to serve by waiting on Mr. Brank. There Price resumed his discourse respecting his ward, the whimsicalness of his character, the prodigality of his ways, and the hard task he had to prevent him from squandering his money away, especially in dabbling with those deceitful allurances, called *Lottery Tickets*: but that, although he was a guardian to the Nobleman, he was still obliged to comply with his whims, against his own inclination, and in opposition to all advice and remonstrance. Old Brank talked of the happy prospects for Samuel, by serving such a master; and Samuel talked of his clothes, whether livery or not? It was concluded, however, that for the present he should procure a *drab coat*, turned up with red, till the Nobleman's pleasure was known, or he came to town.

But here is a circumstance worth regarding—Samuel was ordered to get the clothes

D

at

at his own charge, and make out his bill—the former he did, but the latter was useless, as the reader will soon perceive; and this conduct exactly corresponded with Price's character, who was never known to part with a shilling out of one hand, till he had half a crown for it in the other. Samuel bought the clothes, and was never repaid what he paid for them. A circumstance must be observed here also; Samuel was placed on the left side of the old gentleman, where the patch, during the whole of the conversation, was on Samuel's right side; and thereby Samuel could never see the *right side* of the old gentleman's face.

Samuel having taken his leave of the old gentleman, was ordered to come again in the evening of the first day of the drawing of the lottery, which was in the year 1780; Mr. Price also pretended, that he seldom went to the Nobleman's house of an evening; and,

and, therefore, in order to avoid giving Samuel unnecessary trouble, he was ordered to come to the same place. On that evening Samuel punctually attended, and then Mr. Price pulled out a variety of papers, letters, &c. and told Samuel he had received orders from the thoughtless young Nobleman to purchase lottery tickets, as a venture, against his coming to town, and in that business he meant to employ Samuel. For this purpose he produced some seeming Bank notes, and gave Samuel two notes, one of 20l. and the other of 40l. He also directed Samuel to take the number and dates of the notes on a piece of paper, for fear of losing them, and to go to a lottery-office in the Haymarket, and with one of 20l. to purchase *an eight guinea chance*: from thence he was to go to the corner of Bridge-street, Westminster, to buy another out of the 40l. note, and wait at the door of the Parliament-street Coffee-house till Mr. Brank came to him. These

notes and these data Samuel went with to the Haymarket, and bought the eight guinea chance with a 20l. note,—got the balance,—went to the corner of Bridge-street, and bought another with a 40l. note, pursuant to directions; and was going to the Parliament-street Coffee-house to meet his master, when, from the opposite side of the way, he was hailed by him, complimented on his speed, and informed that he had been so quick, that he, Brank, had not had time to get to the Parliament-street Coffee-house. He was interrogated if he had made the purchases, and replying in the affirmative, he was again commended for his diligence. Brank also enquired if any mistake had happened; and all this with a deal of coughing, imbecility of speech, and feigned accent.

We forgot to mention, that when Samuel received the notes, he received also as many canvass bags as he was ordered to buy shares
or

or chances, and to put every distinct share, and the balance coming out of each note, into a separate bag, for fear, as his master said, the chance of one office might be confused with the chance of another, and Samuel thereby puzzled to know where he had bought the different chances; as by such confusion or forgetfulness it might not be recollected where to apply to, in case of a fortunate number.

Mr. Brank having then obtained the chances and balances, Samuel was ordered to go to Goodluck's at Charing-Cross, from thence to King-street, Covent-garden, York-street, Covent-garden, and purchase some small shares and chances, and to meet his master at the City Coffee-house, Cheap-side. To all these places Samuel went, bought his numbers, and changed his notes; and going along York-street, his master called to him from a coach, pretended he

was fortunate in thus seeing him, made Samuel step in, got the produce of the forgery, and drove away to the City Coffee-house, Cheapside. In their way thither, Brank applauded his new servant's dispatch, and gave him more notes, to the amount of 400l. with instructions to purchase a variety of shares and chances, at different offices about the Exchange; and directed him, as before, to put the chances belonging to each office in a separate bag. Samuel having got out of the coach in Cheapside, he left his employer in the carriage, and executed his commissions with punctuality and success: he then returned, agreeable to his orders, to the City Coffee-house, where he had waited but a few minutes before Mr. Brank came hobbling up to him, and took him into a coach that was in waiting hard by. Brank then began complaining of his health and his infirmities, observing, that the fatigues of business had kept him longer

than

5

than he expected; but warned Samuel to be always exceedingly punctual. In the course of their journey, to the end of Long Acre, where the coachman was ordered to drive, Brank endeavoured to amuse his poor deluded servant, with many reflections on the improper conduct of his ward, and with flattering promises for his attention and fidelity; and, at the time of parting with him, even put a guinea into his hand: but whether it was given with a judicious design, or whether it was in consequence of a momentary impulse of generosity, for his having been fortunate enough to transmute his paper into gold, we will not positively determine; though a tolerable opinion may be formed from this fact, that it was the only money poor Sam ever was paid, although he had then obtained cash, or other valid securities, to the amount of fourteen hundred pounds, on those forged notes, and had expended seven pounds for his master's use.

use. On parting in Long-Acre, Sam was ordered to be in waiting, a few days afterwards, at his old lodgings, in the Strand. As this plan was the routine of Sam's employment, it will only be necessary now to inform our readers, that whenever Samuel went into an office, a woman, unobserved by him, always walked in at the same time, looked about her, as if accompanying somebody who was in the shop, and as soon as Samuel had done his business, the lady likewise walked out.—This woman now proves to have been Mrs. Pounteney, the aunt of Price's wife, described in the advertisement and hand-bill issued by the Bank. This lady always accompanied Price in a coach, whenever he went out, stuck close to Samuel at every office, and as soon as he had safely got out, stepped across the way to Price, who was in the coach, informed him of the success; and then Samuel was hailed, and the property secured by Price, for fear the
servant

servant might play his master a trick, and decamp with the booty; Mrs. Pounteney always keeping out of sight, nor did Samuel ever see her, to know her, during his servitude to Mr. Brank. From Titchfield-street, and during his whole residence there, which was but a week, Price always appeared and went out as Brank; and Mrs. Pounteney always accompanied him, ready to receive the disguise, in case of any accidental discovery; so that, if necessity required it, he was instantly shifted from Brank to Price, and thereby Samuel rendered incapable of saying, "*That was the man that had employed him.*" We return now to the narrative: On the next Sunday morning, a coachman came to the house of Samuel's master, and enquired for Samuel;—the master informed the coachman, that though Sam worked, he did not lodge there—that he should not see him till the next morning. The coachman held a parcel in his hand,

hand, which he said was for Samuel; and the master desired him to leave it, and he should have it the next day. The coachman replied, he was ordered not to leave it, but to take it back, in case he could not see the man; and accordingly went across the way with it. There the master saw the elderly gentleman with whom he had conversed on Samuel's character a few days before, to whom the coachman delivered the parcel, and saw him get into a coach, but in a minute, the coachman returned and left the parcel. This parcel contained notes to the amount of 300*l.* and a letter, directing him to buy, on the next morning, a fixteenth, an eight-guinea chance, and a whole ticket; to repeat his purchases at different offices, with the usual precautions, till the whole were changed, and to meet his master, Mr. Brank, at Mills's Coffee-house, Gerard-street, Soho, at twelve o'clock next day. Samuel having followed the directions,

tions, and succeeded, he went to meet his master, as ordered; he enquired at the Coffee-house, but no such man had been there. In a few minutes, as he was standing at the Coffee-house door, a coachman came up to him, and told him a gentleman, at the corner of Macclesfield-street, wanted to speak with him: on this Samuel went, and found his master, Brank, in a coach, who ordered him to come in, and made him sit on the left-hand, as before described, that Samuel could only see the *patch-side* of his master's face. The tickets, shares, chances, and balances, having been delivered, Mr. Brank ordered his servant to bid the coachman drive towards Hampstead, and in the way he gave Samuel three Sixteenths, as a reward for his care and diligence. He talked much of his ward, and said he would be in town in a day or two, and that he should speak highly of Samuel's industry. On these subjects Brank preached
till

till they reached Mother Black Cap's, Kentish Town, and then Samuel was bid to order the coachman to turn round. In their way back Samuel had fresh notes given him, to the amount of 500*l*. with the same directions, to lay them out in the same manner about the 'Change, and to meet his master at the same place in the evening, where Mr. Brank said he should dine; but now Samuel was ordered not to dispose of these notes at the same offices he had done the others, and the reason for this need not be explained.

Samuel performed this task also, and just as he got up to the Coffee-house door, a porter accosted him, and conducted him to his master, who was in a coach a little way off. Samuel was here blamed for his delay, a feigned anger assumed, with a declaration, that he would not do if not punctual; that he had exceeded his time, and that the nobleman

bleman was very particular in time, even to a minute. Samuel apologized—Brank got hold of the cash, &c. he then ordered him to go forward to the New-Inn, and hire a post chaise to carry them to Greenwich to meet the gentleman's steward, who was also his banker, and to whom he was going for more money, to purchase more tickets; making, at the same time, several observations on the imprudence and prodigality of his ward.

Samuel was ordered to go to the Ship and prepare a dinner, while Brank was supposed to be negotiating his business; and instructed him also, not to wait longer than three o'clock, but go to dinner at that time, if he, Brank, did not return.

At half past four o'clock, Brank came hobbling, coughing, and seemingly quite out of breath with fatigue;—they drank tea

E

together

together at the Ship, and afterwards returned to town in the chaise: but here it should be observed, that Sam was the paymaster for his dinner and pleasures of the day, under pretence of his master having no change.

From Greenwich they drove to Lombard-street, and there discharged the chaise; Sam there received more notes to the amount of 350*l.* which he got rid of in his usual way; and at the City Coffee-house, was again fortunate enough to meet his master before he got to the door. He was then ordered to attend the next evening at his master's lodgings, which he did three or four times, in the course of which he negotiated 500*l.* more in the same manner.

In negotiating the last sum which Samuel received, he visited Branscombe and Ruddle's.—Here he was interrogated whom he
lived

lived with, &c. and in this conversation honest Samuel said, he was servant to a very rich nobleman's guardian, and that he was at board-wages, and gave his address to his old master, the musical instrument-maker. Having delivered to his master, Brank, the cash, &c. in the usual way, he was told, that perhaps he might not be wanted again for a week, and that he might wait till sent for. Before the expiration of that week, however, Samuel was apprehended, and conducted to Bow-street, examined by the magistrates and gentlemen of the Bank, where he told his artless tale; but to which no credit being given, he was committed to Tothilfields Bridewell, on suspicion of having counterfeited the notes of the Bank of England; where he was soon visited by Sir S. Wright and Mr. Bond.— And thus it was, that the old gentleman *below*, who had hitherto been on very familiar terms with the old gentleman *above*,

E 2

played

played off one of his customary ill humours for a moment, had forsaken his friend, and thereby put a temporary period to his progress: for it is evident, that matters of this kind, cannot be effected without the first mentioned gentleman's constant attendance.

Samuel's examinations were long and frequent, and the whole of the transactions taken as minutely as we have stated them. The scheme laid to secure Mr. Brank was as follows: Samuel had been ordered by Brank to stay till he was sent for; and an inferior officer of Bow-street was stationed at the shop in the Strand, where Samuel worked, in case he should call in the mean time. A few days elapsed, when Samuel received a message to meet his master the next day at Mills's Coffee-house, *exactly* at eleven o'clock. The plan was accordingly concerted. Samuel was ordered by Mr. Bond not to go till
five

five minutes *past* the time, the above inferior officer attending at a distance; and Mr. Bond, disguised as a porter, with a knot on his shoulder, followed. When Samuel came to the Coffee-house, he found that a *real* porter had that instant been there, and enquired for such a person in such a livery, and could have been hardly got out of the door.—This information Samuel directly communicated to the *Gentleman Porter*, and Samuel was sent back to wait; but the afore-said old gentleman *below*, who had been taking a bit of a nap in the mean time, and had; luckily for the old gentleman *above*, waked in an exceeding good humour, was determined to be too many for their mutual enemy; for, having seated himself by the side of his friend Brank, in an hackney coach hard by, he discovered, in the manner he did to the young student at Madrid, the afore-said momentary conversation between Samuel and the said *Gentleman Porter*. Both the old

gentlemen, therefore, took immediate flight, and hugged and caressed each other on this fortunate discovery, leaving Samuel, the *inferior officer*, and the *Gentleman Porter*, as cruelly disappointed as the said two gentlemen were highly pleased at the escape. The reader, we hope, will not be offended at this imitation of *Old Harry*—we mean FIELDING, who never was more severe upon vice, than when he treated it ludicrously. To return: an instant *rush* was made at Titchfield-street, but in vain; they found that Brank had never been there since Samuel and he had left it together; and as a smack of Scrub's account of Archer and Aimwell, they did not know *who he was, where he came from, or whither he was going*. The advertisements again shone forth, the hand-bills were showered around, but all in vain; nor was master Brank ever heard of till the next lottery and Christmas times. Poor Samuel, however, still lay in durance vile; but his
innocence

innocence being tolerably established, he was, after having been robbed of seven pounds odd by his master, and suffering eleven months imprisonment, discharged with a present of *twenty pounds*.

The ensuing lottery Price played the same game with the same effect, but more artfully, with notes of higher value, for 20l. and 40l. were grown too suspicious—another lad got himself into custody—another *rash* was made, and Price missed again by a moment.

His next scheme was an advertisement for a person in the linen-drapery business, and with notes of 50l. up to a 100l. two agents purchased linen-drapery. These two young fellows were likewise detected, by having passed an 100l. note at Woollerton's, linen-draper in Oxford-street, who was fortunate enough to recover the whole of his property back, which Mr. Bond had seized at No. 3,

on the Terrace in Tottenham-court-road. In short, to follow Mr. Price for six years, through all his proceedings, would be impossible, the account would swell to *folios*—suffice it to say, he had forty-five different names, forty-five different disguises, and forty-five different lodgings; but that this was *his unfortunate number*!

His various deceptions in the circulation of forged notes now becoming highly dangerous, he turned his thoughts to a new species, equally artful, and, for a time, equally successful. Still in disguise, however, he went to the Coffee-houses about 'Change—got a boy to take 10l. to the Bank, giving him directions to the teller, who gives the customary ticket to the cashier who pays; this ticket the lad had orders, instead of pursuing the teller's direction, to the cashier, as is usual, when out of sight of the teller, to turn round another way, and
bring

bring the ticket back to the Coffee-house. There he used to alter the tickets from 10l. to 100l. by adding an 0, or a 1, to any other sum where the addition might puzzle the teller, as from 50 to 150, &c. and then send it, by another hand, to the cashier, who paid it unsuspectingly without knowing.—This scheme was his last, and he practised it, till having received a Bank note which he passed at Mr. Aldus's, a Pawnbroker in Berwick-street, as we at first said, he was there apprehended. This note had had many indorsements, and Price having disguised several of them, by additions to the names; and his friend, the *aforesaid old GENTLEMAN*, not being then at his elbow, probably then engaged in some other equally honourable employ, Mr. Price left one indorsement standing entire. This led to Mr. Aldus's, who knew him by the name of Powel, where he came two or three times a week, had pledged things of great value, and whose residence

Mr.

Mr. Aldus could never find out, although he caused him to be frequently followed. Another officer was then, by Mr. Clarke's direction, placed there till he did come, which was the next day but one, when he was amused and kept in conversation till Mr. Clarke's arrival, who secured, and brought him to Bow-street.

These suspicions were almost *tantamount* to proof, of his being the celebrated Mr. Patch, which name he got from the *patch over his eye*. Thus were the Gentlemen of the Bank made happy in the detection of so dangerous an offender; and the only discovery they had now to make, which was of the utmost importance, was, where the female companion and the implements were concealed; and which, by a manœuvre of Mr. Clarke's, were discovered, but not till after his death; this we shall relate in turn. One thing we must not omit to mention; when he was under

der examination, Sir Sampson Wright suddenly called on Sam, who stood behind Price; Sam answered, and appeared to his old master, who started as at a ghost; but recollecting himself, he assumed his old *congee*, and made a most polite bow to his old servant, no doubt either to awaken his humanity, or hint at what he might expect if he disclaimed him. The fact was, Samuel could only swear to his voice, but could not have the least idea of his person or features.—Being then committed to Tothilfields Bridewell, he turned his thoughts, naturally enough, to the destruction of the implements. Well knowing, that nothing could be got out of Mrs. Price, or any of his family, to affect him, he had made no scruple of declaring, when under examination, that his lodgings were at a cheesemonger's, in the neighbourhood of Totrenham-court-road; equally secure that nothing could be found there to afford the least suspicion of his being the
forger

forger described under the character of *Patch*. Determined to destroy every thing that could lend the least assistance to that discovery, he sent for Mrs. Price and his eldest son, a fine youth about fifteen years of age, and then to her great surprise, communicated to her the circumstances respecting her aunt, and that her lodgings were in a house in Tottenham-street.

By the son he sent a letter to Mrs. Pounteney, informing her of his situation and desiring her instantly to destroy every atom of the apparatus, clothes, &c. To get this letter safe out of prison, he had recourse to an expedient as artful as it was successful. He told his son, that it was often the custom of the keepers of prisons to search the persons of visitors to prisoners, and as he was charged with an offence, to detect which he had every expedient to dread, his own safety required him to have recourse

to equal stratagems to frustrate their designs. Accordingly, having wrote the letter, he desired his son to take off his shoe, which being done, Mr. Price tore up the inner sole, and under it put the letter to Mrs. Pounteney, with this injunction, that if he should be asked any questions at the gate, whether he had any thing from his father to carry any where, to say no; if they attempted to search him, to submit to the search quietly, and with temper. This contrivance, and these directions, seem to have been the result of a knowledge of the practice of prisons, and which no Newgate-bird could have schemed better to have defeated. We do not, indeed know, or have we heard, that he was ever before confined for felony; he was often in custody for debt, and two or three times confined in the King's Bench prison; but there, such secret conveyances are unnecessary, and he could not derive his knowledge from any other

F

source

source than suspicions founded upon hearsay, and what his own good sense dictated to him. Thus prudent and thus guarded, in his conveyance of a letter, to the very person whom the Bank of England would have given any sum to discover; the manœuvre had its effect, and the letter reached the aunt in safety. The reason why the Bank was so solicitous to discover the abode of this woman, is evident; they knew that wherever she was, the dangerous engines were; and to get at her, would have been getting into possession of all that was so destructive to the community, and the destruction of them was the first object of their hearts.

We must here, for a while, leave Mr. Price in his confinement, and accompany the letter to Mrs. Pounteney: this shrewd woman, on the receipt of the letter, with an admirable presence of mind, came down
into

into the kitchen where the maid was, and mildly blamed her for keeping so small a fire in such cold weather. She ordered her to take the cheeks out of the grate, and throw on fresh coals; which being done, and the fire beginning to be somewhat high, she artfully told the maid, she had received a letter from her master, who was gone abroad, informing her, that the clothes he had lately worn, he had discovered to be infected by the plague, and contracted during the time of his being last out of England; and that he had ordered her to burn the whole of them immediattly, for fear of the infection spreading, and endangering the lives of all in the house.

She accordingly brought down every article of clothes which Mr. Price had concealed himself in under the character of Patch, and laying them on a heap on the kitchen floor, took a cullender and sprinkled

them with water, till they were sufficiently damp to prevent their blazing. When this was done, she put them on the fire, and as soon as they began to blaze again, took them off, turned them, and watered afresh, laying the unburnt part downwards. Thus she continued till the whole was consolidated into a cake, and by that means reduced every atom to a powder: thus with a presence of mind, and a dexterity unparalleled in such an extremity, let what would come to pass, whatever could effect Mr. Price, otherwise, nothing could then discover him by dress, as the much-wanted Patch.

Having thus effected one principle end of the letter, she then turned her thoughts to the other—the destruction of the materials with which Mr. Price had so industriously carried on his ingenious practices. The servant had a sister living in the neighbourhood, and Mr. Price having had occasion
once

once or twice for a carpenter, through the medium of this sister, a carpenter in the neighbourhood had been employed by Mrs. Pounteney, and to whom Price had never been visible; she therefore ordered the servant to go for that carpenter, in order to take down the wood frame, presses, instruments, &c. with which Price made his paper, and pulled off his notes from the plates, all which were exactly fitted up in the mode and manner of a copper-plate printer's materials. While the maid was out, Mrs. P—— took the copper-plates, &c. and put them into the fire, and when thoroughly burnt through, and reduced to a pliability capable of being twisted, took them out, and let them lay till they were cool, and might be broke with ease. Having effected this, she reduced them to very small pieces, which, with a large bundle of small wires, with which Mr. Price had manufactured the paper and water-marks, she gave to the son, and

desired him to take them to the dust-heaps behind the houses, in the adjacent fields, and there distribute them from heap to heap, kicking the dust over the pieces as he distributed them, in order to prevent them from being seen by those, whose occupations daily lead them to the dust heaps; and also, if seen, they might not be found in such parcels, as to occasion a surprize, or future enquiry. The lad having obeyed his aunt in these particulars, the remains of these plates lay there, till, by a stratagem of Mr. Clarke's, they were brought to Bow-street by dust-men, who found them, but when found, could have no idea of their use. The carpenter having taken down the apparatus, and being paid for his trouble, was dispatched; every thing that was possible to be consumed was brought down, and reduced to ashes, so that nothing remained a body, but the bits of plates and wires.

the

The step Mr. Clarke took after Price's death to find out Mrs. Pounteney and the implements, had its effect. Mrs. Price, who, as we have before said, was informed by her husband of the place of Mrs. Pounteney's abode, discovered it. She was taken into custody,—ingenuously told every circumstance from beginning to end, which were of a nature almost exceeding human belief. The frame with which he made the last Bank notes was found at the house, and all the implements which went to make the paper, with the press for pulling off the notes, at a smith's in the neighbourhood, whither the carpenter, who took them down, had carried them by Mrs. Pounteney's direction. The remaining wires, which had been thrown into the dust-heaps, Mr. Clarke procured by going to them, and telling some dust-men there, if they searched and found such things to bring them to Bow-street, and they should have five shillings for their trouble. They

searched

searched and found them—It was evening, and they were stopped by the patrol, with their wives, and brought in custody to Bow-street, where an explanation took place, and the men were paid as promised. The whole of the mystery discovered, the principal offender dead, the apparatus found and destroyed, and the Gentlemen of the Bank, fully satisfied that no accomplice lurked behind the curtain, not wishing to take the life of a woman away, have humanely discharged her; and, as well-wishers to the community, we hope her escape will teach her not to abuse their lenity.

We have now concluded our account of Mr. Price, from the time of his commencing his different schemes on the Bank, in the year 1780, to his last hour.—We have said nothing of his circumstances previous to that. From the best intelligence, we find, he was born in Monmouth-street, St. Giles's, his relations

lations living there now. Was a considerable time there in the character of what is called a *Barker*. That afterwards he was valet to Sir Francis Blake Delaval, went with him the tour of Europe, returned to England, and through Sir Francis, who was the bosom companion of the late Samuel Foote, Esq. Price became comedian. That he acted a principal part in that well-known business, by which Sir Francis obtained his lady, with an immense fortune, and in which Mr. Foote performed the character of the conjurer, and afterwards conjured that gentleman out of 500*l.* in a sham scheme. That he afterwards set up in the distillery, defrauded the revenue, was sent to the King's-Bench, was released by an insolvent act; turned brewer, defrauded a very capital gentleman in that branch, now living, out of 6000*l.* by the assistance of the lady aforementioned, in one of his disguises. He was also mentioned in a
book,

book, entitled the Swindler's Chronicle.—
 Became lottery-office keeper, then stock-
 broker, gambled in the alley, was ruined
 by it, again set up lottery-office keeper;
 courted Mrs. Pounteney, ran away with the
 niece, and lived with both. We have said
 enough already of his character, to shew
 what he was capable of, and what ought to
 have been to him, as well as to every person
 breathing, a certain, though stale maxim,
 that **HONESTY IS THE BEST
 POLICY.**

It has been said in the public papers,
 that he had employed his solicitor, appoint-
 ed his counsel, arranged his affairs with
 prudence and wisdom for making his de-
 fence; and that opinions had been given on
 his case, sufficiently favourable, to induce
 him to stand trial: not a word of this is
 true, except the circumstance of having
 engaged an attorney; if there is any mean-
 ing

ing in the supposed favourable opinions, it is this, that changing the teller's ticket at the Bank, from a small to a larger sum, payable by a cashier, was a fraud, and not a forgery. Such an answer to such a case, might be given by those people of the profession, who are lawyers among tools, and tools among lawyers; but we dare assert, that Mr. Price would not have applied to such shallow geniusses; he would have stated his case to men eminent in the profession, and conversant in the crown law; from them he must have been told, that as long as the words WARRANT, or ORDER, for payment of money, remain in the statutes, for the prevention of forgeries, they would have told him, that altering, or publishing a teller's ticket, knowing it to be altered, with an intention to defraud, is a *specific* forgery: but it is evident, from the event, that Mr. Price placed no confidence in the shallow objection—he was conscious the
 objection

objection would not avail him—that if his identity was proved, he was undone, and his sole reliance was on the concealment of his person; and on this he so much relied, that he braved his fate, and courted the encounter, by sending for the people, whom he had employed as Patch, to view him as Price; so well was he assured, that they could never recognize him as the former, in the character of the latter.

This assurance may be accounted for by the following measure he took to try if he was even suspected. He would go to the coffee-houses about 'Change, appear as Price, enquire for Mr. Norton, write a letter, and leave it at the bar. In ten minutes he would come in again as Mr. Norton, take his own letter, drink his coffee, and away. A boy, who had two or three times taken his cash to the teller, and that boy's mother, who had also seen him, were brought by his attorney
to

to see him in prison. The boy could not identify him; the mother could; and, in spite of all that could be said, persisted in her knowledge. We hear for a fact, they were both before the magistrate at Bow-street. Mr. Price had been three or four times brought up there to be viewed only by the persons who had taken forged notes of him in different disguises;—the event was, he saw the impossibility of escaping the slow but sure hand of justice. He told the keeper he had been *betrayed*, and the next morning was found hanging. The invention, the method, and the means he took, were of a piece with his usual precaution and deliberation. He informed his son, that the people of the prison came into his room sooner than he wished; that in his situation he had something secret to write, which they might get at by suddenly coming upon him;—that he wished to prevent it, and gave his son money to purchase two gimblets and a sixpenny cord,

G

pointing

pointing out to him how he would stick the gimblets in from post to post, and tie the cord across the door, which opened inwards, and thereby prevent any person from coming in till he pleased to permit them. The scheme had its effect,—he fastened the two gimblets under two hat-screws; and thus, having four securities to prevent his falling, he was found the next morning hanging without coat or shoes, and his thumbs tied down to the waistband of his breeches, to secure him against struggling.

Thus, after practising fraud for upwards of six years, every day crouded with iniquity, dread, and obscurity, sunk with the horrors of his own conscience, he rushed into the presence of the Almighty, overwhelmed with a crime past all repentance, *self-murder.*

Under

Under his waistcoat were found four papers ; one was a petition to the King, praying protection for his wife and eight innocent children, all of whom, he said, had never offended. In this petition he stated, that he had written a pamphlet, with a view to prevent a war between the crowns of England and Denmark, and to rescue the character of Queen Matilda from the base aspersions of the Queen Dowager's party. The second was of a similar nature, to the gentlemen of the Bank, with an appeal to their humanity. The third contained the most warm and grateful thanks to Mr. Fenwick, the keeper of the prison, for the many obligations he was under to him, for his consistent indulgence and favours ; with a prayer, that the Almighty would reward him for it in due time. The last consisted of an affectionate leave of his wife—He begged her forgiveness for every injury he had done her, and intreated her attention to

their offspring ; concluding with a hope of their meeting in heaven, where their present miseries would have an end. One thing is observable :—In these papers, formed with consideration, he neither confessed or denied any thing. The Coroner's inquest sat on his body, and brought in their verdict *felo de se*, in consequence of which, he was buried in the cross-road near the prison, leading to Chelsea. We are in possession of original anecdotes of Mr. Price, which, were we to lay before the public, would swell this publication to a great extent ; and would only prove the baseness of a heart, which is painted in its true colours in the foregoing sheets.



Enol